

Key points about business-to-business PR

1. There can be, of course, no guarantees of media coverage – unless you own the media! This is why more organisations are turning towards producing their own ezines in support of their media activity. In PR terms, each story issued must be newsworthy for it to stand a chance of competing successfully with all the other stories that are being issued each day. Moreover, editors of ‘hard copy’ publications must recognise the value of the stories before the readers of their publications are given a chance to do so – and must have the space available in a soon-to-be-published edition of their publication for the story to have a chance of being published.

2. Any PR campaign will need at least three to four months to take effect and for its effects to be seen – if only because of the lead times on some publications and the frequency with which they are published (for example, editions of monthlies and bi-monthlies are being finalised two to three months before publication date - so a campaign starting in, say, January, could not expect to see many results until about March or April). These days, however, web-based news sites and newswires offer a more instant return on investment in PR. The key, however, is to know which of these sites are widely read and, thus, are influential – and which are not.

3. Before recruiting a PR consultant you should ask yourself:

- Does this person have the right range and depth of experience to help me achieve my business goals? Somebody who can get your name into a newspaper but can't get this appearance put into an appropriate strategic or marketing context, isn't up to the job.
- Is the person who is going to promote your company's products able to understand the technical aspects of what you do and then translate them into benefits for the end-user? Does s/he have the written and oral skills to turn them into a newsworthy story?

4. While clients will want their media coverage to bring sales, this relationship is impossible to assess. For example, will a potential customer 'buy' from the client after reading one item of news, or two – or more – and in what timescale? Nonetheless, a growing volume of media coverage should help to at least:

- increase the client's profile in the market,
- improve the client's credibility in the market,
- raise traffic to the client's website and
- increase sales enquiries.

5. It is important that, once press coverage occurs, the client generates the maximum value from that – via reprints/copies to use in pressbooks during sales pitches and as enclosures with direct mail letters. If this does not happen, this will adversely affect the 'metrics' relating to the effectiveness of the PR campaign – and this is one of the many contributory factors that are not within the PR agency's control.

6. The most successful PR people don't try to solve their client's problems. They try to help editors solve their readers' problems.